



MAC FACTS

from
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SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING & SERVICE

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A Message from Dru

February is the month of lovers, especially on the 14th. Remember your loved ones and don't forget - Children in the back seat cause accidents and accidents in the back seat cause children!



I will be spending some time out of town this month. The weekend of the 12th and 13th, wife Carol and I make the trek to San Antonio to attend the Texas Music Educators Association convention and Texas All-State High School Band concerts where step-daughter Alisha will, once again, be seated in the 1st chair for piccolo. On the 26th and 27th we're off to the other side of the state, to Houston, for auditions for the University of Michigan Band. Alisha is hoping to go there next year and hoping for a scholarship [and so are we!]



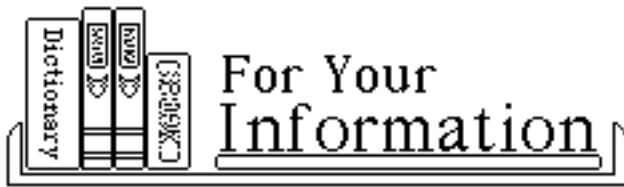
Let's give a great big Mac Help Desk welcome to these first-of-the-new-century client/friends: Bob Schlumpf, Marinelle Thompson, S.F. Waranch Co., Linda Faulkner Enterprises, Patricia Beard, Prudence Mackintosh, Gloria Ross Design, Jo Fay Godbey, Gardner's Ribbon & Lace, Cathi Gramling, Sue Benn, GTE, Buddy Keeley, Eugene Tanski, Joe Varrone, David Murry, Herb and Margaret Young, Louis Bunch, and Skip Edwards. Yahooooo! Welcome to y'all!



Phone Procedures - Just so you know: We don't have a secretary. We have voice mail and pagers. When you leave a voice message it won't get picked up until the end of the day or, in all likelihood, until the next morning. If you need to get in contact with me sooner, page me! I'll call you back ASAP. If you have an emergency, page me and add '*911' after your area code and phone number. I'll call you back immediately.[But just remember about the boy who cried 'Wolf!']



Updates - Every now and then you ought to consider updating your software to take advantage of a newer version. You might want to consider these: Netscape Communicator, Eudora, Norton Utilities, Adobe Acrobat, Stuffit, and others. Go to [VersionTracker.com](http://www.versiontracker.com) (<http://www.versiontracker.com>) to see what's new.



A QUICK DIP INTO AQUA, THE MAC OS X INTERFACE

by Jeff Carlson

One of the few surprises at Macworld Expo in San Francisco was a first look at the new Mac OS X user interface. Although the new operating system was announced in mid-1998 and its technical features (like preemptive multitasking and protected memory) are known, those things don't have the potential to stir up the ire and interest of Mac users quite so much as the notion of tampering with the Mac OS look and feel.

So when Steve Jobs said that he was going to show off the Mac OS X user interface, which he claimed has been one of the best-kept secrets within Apple, I perked up. Sure, Mac OS X can do some whiz-bang things under the hood and not turn your Mac into putty when an application crashes, but what will I be looking at for several hours each day? How will Mac OS X affect the way I interact with my computer?

It's important to note that the demos at Macworld Expo, both during Jobs's keynote and in the Apple booth, represent the closest look at Aqua so far - and it's not much. A limited preview is available from Apple's Web site, but questions remain about elements not demonstrated at Macworld. No doubt there will be tweaks and revelations by the time Mac OS X is released later in the year.

The Look You Want to Feel -- The success of Apple's iProducts, from iMac to iBook, has shown that appearances do matter, that the look of something can often determine its success, regardless of other technical merits. So it's no surprise that Apple's emphasis on look is moving to its software as well.

Overall, Aqua is surprisingly sparse and clean, and will be familiar to anyone who has used a Mac. The gray fill of the current Platinum interface is replaced by white, with a subtle horizontal line pattern similar to the iMac's faceplate texture. Aqua gets its name from the use of a watery, translucent look for interface elements like buttons and sliders; the top navigational elements at Apple's Web site use a similar effect.

Aqua also employs soft drop shadows to windows and menus to provide a more polished appearance and emphasize layered items. I'm surprised that I like the effect as much as I do, since drop shadows are overused. Other effects, like animation, make an appearance in Aqua. Rather than a dull black outline to denote a default button in dialog boxes, Aqua's method of highlighting a button is for it to light up and slowly pulse like the iBook's and iMac's power button.

One noticeable departure from today's interface is the placement of window controls for close, zoom, and minimize (the successor to WindowShade, which collapses the window into a new element, the Dock). All three are now round buttons located at the left edge of the title bar, and follow a traffic light metaphor: red closes, yellow minimizes, and green zooms. For people who are color blind or who still use grayscale displays, the buttons also feature a roll-over effect when you pass your cursor over them: the close button displays an X, the minimize button displays a minus sign (-), and the zoom button displays a plus sign (+). The new controls also function for

both active and inactive windows, so you can close a background window without bringing it to the foreground.

It will be interesting to see how current Mac users adapt to the new arrangement. There's bound to be a bit of frustration from users who have been zooming their windows from the right side for years.

Less Clutter, Less Confusion -- In Mac OS X's Finder, the title bar sports one other button: a transparent blob at the right side that toggles Single Window Mode. Unlike the current user interface, where burrowing deep within a folder structure can leave a scattering of overlapping open windows, Single Window Mode displays only the active content. If you're using the Finder in Single Window Mode, only the current directory is shown; within an application, you can have multiple files open but only the active one actually displays.

Long-time Mac users may scoff at the Single Window Mode, but I think it's a great idea. Computers can be intimidating to new users, and part of that intimidation is caused by complexity; a screen full of windows that aren't in active use is complex. Sticking to the current task reduces clutter and confusion. Luckily, it's easy to toggle between modes by clicking the Single Window Mode button, though it's odd to have what appears to be a system-wide preference on every window, whereas the other controls are window-specific.

Modal dialogs are also now specific to the windows they belong to. If you close a file that hasn't been saved, the standard "Do you want to save changes?" dialog is attached to the file's title bar, and remains there until you've acted on it - but you can still switch to another application. Also, dialogs are translucent, letting you see the data beneath them. It's hard to tell from the demo if this is actually a useful feature or an example of eye candy. Still, the translucency adds yet another level of visual polish that isn't found in current operating systems.

The Dock Is In -- A new interface element to the Mac OS is the Dock, an area along the bottom of the screen where you can store apparently anything. The Dock resembles the Windows Task Bar, but you can drop inactive applications, frequently used folders or files, or favorite QuickTime movies into the Dock. The Trash is also now a member of the Dock, rather than its own element on the desktop. During Steve Jobs's demo, he repeatedly minimized items to show off the way they move: windows don't just disappear and appear in the Dock, but rather stretch and shoot their way to the bottom of the screen like an animated sheet of rubber sucked down by a vacuum cleaner, a transition called the "genie effect."

A docked item appears as an icon, either generic (like a folder) or as a preview of the item's content (such as images or QuickTime movies, which can continue to play). You can specify whether the Dock always appears or is activated when the mouse moves to that area. You can also specify the size of the Dock icons dynamically. And as the bottom of the screen fills up, the icons automatically shrink to accommodate more items. One of the highlights of Jobs's demo was the Dock's capability to enlarge each icon as the mouse passed over it, resulting in a shifting sand dunes effect whereby the adjacent icons resized in diminishing proportions.

The Dock demo elicited the biggest wows of the talk, and though it's certainly snazzy, I wonder how effective it will actually be. It feels random to have your applications and documents and whatever else just hanging out at the bottom of the screen. The placement also begs the question of what will happen to the current Mac OS's tabbed windows, which also occupy real estate at the bottom of the screen. I rely on pop-up windows for quick access to email attachments, file downloads, and aliases, and it's unclear if I can transfer that functionality to Mac OS X.

Finding the Finder -- Long-time Mac users will also have to become accustomed to the idea that the Finder lives in a window by itself. (In fact, the Mac OS X Finder looks like a variation of Mac

OS 9's Sherlock 2). It features buttons to access your computer, applications, documents, favorites, and people, plus a button labelled Home that takes you to a main directory of your choice (whether it's on your machine or on a network). The Finder works as a single window view by default, but you can also open multiple windows as in the existing Finder. The Finder also incorporates a third, split-pane column view, inherited from Mac OS X's NeXT origins. As you navigate the file structure of your hard disk, new columns appear to display a horizontal hierarchy of the structure.

Although putting the Finder into its own window sounds alien to most of us, it makes sense for new users. Under the current Mac OS, tell a new user to switch to the Finder, and they're likely to reply, "Huh?" That's because the Finder and the desktop are synonymous to most of us. The Finder will become the tool to find information, instead of a catch-all for file and application icons. It's also good that you can choose which view to use. It's no secret that Jobs has advocated the split-pane browsing method for years. And allegedly it took quite a bit of work within Apple to convince him that the Finder should offer traditional navigation as well as the split-pane view.

Graphics, of Quartz -- Mac OS X's 2D graphics capabilities come from Quartz, a rendering engine based on PDF (which is a vague descendant of Display PostScript used in the NeXT operating system). In fact, much of the effects mentioned so far, like translucent dialog boxes and menus, drop shadows, and resizable Dock icons, are due to the Quartz engine. Another example is the use of anti-aliased text, though hopefully this feature will also be a user-definable preference. Although I find well-designed aliased text is easy to read, others find most if not all anti-aliased text alarmingly smudged, especially at small sizes.

Having built-in PDF support means that applications will be able to save to PDF without additional software. However, it's not clear if Quartz will provide many of the more subtle features of PDF, such as forms, routing information, and digital signatures. Jobs did demonstrate the Quartz PDF Compositor, an application that could easily add, manipulate, and export PostScript-based artwork with drop shadows and variable transparency.

Good Enough to Lick? During the Macworld Expo keynote, Steve Jobs reinforced his unusual oral fixation on Apple products by claiming that they were good enough to lick. Certainly, the interface looks different from the softly beveled appearance of Mac OS 8 and later. But is the Mac OS X interface just iCandy? Will the pulsing glow of an OK button really make a difference? Yes and no. The new look adds pizzazz to the interface, which is both cosmetic and functional. It's an implementation of Look Different: for someone who has never used a computer before, the interface is clean and inviting.

But the new design also serves a similar function to the iMac's external design: it will be harder for Microsoft (or others) to add pulsing buttons and animated windows to their operating systems without acknowledging that they're copying the look of the Mac. Computer makers are finding that they can't directly copy the look of the iMac, and it's likely that Apple could pursue companies that infringe upon the Aqua interface. Surprisingly, this has already begun to happen. Apple's lawyers recently sent cease-and-desist letters to a site for posting a "skin" titled WinAqua for use with the Windows interface-customization tool WindowBlinds. Apple also apparently asked Casady & Green to yank an Aqua-looking skin for SoundJam.

The demonstration at Macworld Expo was definitely a fun peek at Aqua, and it will be interesting to see more details emerge as the estimated Mac OS X release date of the middle of 2000 nears. Numerous questions remain that weren't answered in the demo. For example, the Apple logo appears in the middle of the menu bar; is it the functional Apple menu we've used for years, or just corporate branding? Either way, what happens in a program that has more than the standard handful of menus? Does the logo slide aside, or do menus wrap around it? Also, how much of the interface will be controlled by the user? Can I specify solid buttons and scroll bars if Aqua's

watery elements make me seasick? Only time - roughly six months if Apple can keep its intended schedule - will give us these answers.

We'll have to wait longer for the more difficult answers, however. As Apple embarks on the next major revision of its Macintosh operating system, how durable is the interface? What happens in a few years when the translucent, bright-colored look is out of fashion - not only onscreen, but in case designs as well? Will we look back on the Aqua interface someday the way we look back on bell-bottomed pants or fluorescent leg-warmers? Will the Mac OS interface change according to Apple's ad campaigns?

It's possible. However, at the Expo keynote, Jobs began his introduction to Aqua with a black-and-white image of the first Macintosh interface. The crowd laughed, but the joke had two faces: that original screen looked so foreign compared to the colorful displays on our modern desktops; yet at the same time its windows, icons, menu bar, and Trash can are elements we see on our Macs every day. In other words, interface change is not bad in and of itself, but it must be managed carefully to be both comfortably familiar and invitingly different.



NEWSLINE

Apple Ups Performance of Power Mac G4 Line

MACWORLD EXPO TOKYO—February 16, 2000—Apple® today announced it has increased the performance of its industry-leading Power Mac™ G4 line with faster processors running at 400-, 450-, and 500 MHz. Pricing remains unchanged, starting at US\$1,599.

The Power Mac G4, which features the PowerPC G4 processor with its remarkable Velocity Engine™, runs professional applications like Adobe Photoshop over 50 percent faster than 800 MHz Pentium III-based PCs.*

“The Power Mac G4 is the tool of choice for creative professionals,” said Steve Jobs, Apple’s CEO. “Not only is it the fastest Mac ever, it’s the fastest personal computer ever.”

The G4 is available in the following standard configurations:

- * Power Mac G4 400 MHz with 1MB level 2 backside cache contains 64MB of SDRAM, ATI RAGE 128 Pro AGP 2X with 16MB video SDRAM, a 10GB Ultra ATA/66 hard drive, DVD-ROM drive with DVD-Video playback, FireWire® and USB ports, 10/100BASE-T Ethernet and a built-in V.90 56K modem;
- * Power Mac G4 450 MHz with 1MB level 2 backside cache contains 128MB of SDRAM, ATI RAGE 128 Pro AGP 2X with 16MB video SDRAM, a 20GB Ultra ATA/66 hard drive, a DVD-ROM drive with DVD-Video playback, a ZIP drive, FireWire and USB ports, 10/100BASE-T Ethernet and a built-in V.90 56K modem;
- * Power Mac G4 500 MHz with 1MB level 2 backside cache contains 256MB of SDRAM, ATI RAGE 128 Pro AGP 2X with 16MB video SDRAM, a 27GB Ultra ATA/66 hard drive, DVD-RAM drive with DVD-Video playback, a ZIP drive, FireWire and USB ports and 10/100BASE-T Ethernet.

All three G4 models support Apple’s revolutionary AirPort™ wireless networking solution which provides totally untethered Internet access at speeds of up to 11 megabits per second. Apple’s AirPort solution includes the AirPort Card, which fits inside Apple’s new G4, and the AirPort

Base Station, which contains a 56K modem and a 10BASE-T Ethernet port for connecting to a phone line, cable modem, DSL modem or local area network.

In addition, Apple today announced two new Macintosh® Server G4 systems and a new Macintosh Server G4 with Mac® OS X Server software:

- * Macintosh Server G4 400 MHz with 1MB level 2 backside cache contains 128MB SDRAM, ATI RAGE 128 Pro AGP 2X with 16MB video SDRAM, 20GB Ultra ATA/66 7,200 rpm hard drive, DVD-ROM drive, 10/100BASE-T Ethernet and AppleShare® IP 6.3.1.
- * Macintosh Server G4 500 MHz with 1MB level 2 backside cache contains 256MB SDRAM, cache, ATI RAGE 128 Pro AGP 2X with 16MB video SDRAM, 18GB Ultra2 LVD SCSI 10,000 rpm hard drive, DVD-ROM drive, 10/100BASE-T Ethernet and AppleShare IP 6.3.1.
- * Macintosh Server G4 with Mac® OS X Server 500 MHz with 1MB level 2 backside cache contains 256MB SDRAM, ATI RAGE 128 Pro AGP 2X with 16MB video SDRAM, 18GB Ultra 2 LVD SCSI 10,000 rpm hard drive, DVD-ROM drive (maximum), 4-port 10/100BASE-T Ethernet controller and Mac OS X Server 1.2 software.

Pricing and Availability

Available immediately through Mac Help Desk, Inc, the Power Mac G4 400 MHz is priced at US\$1,599, the Power Mac G4 450 MHz is priced at US\$2,499, and the Power Mac G4 500 MHz is priced at US\$3,499. Also available from Mac Help Desk, Inc, the Macintosh Server G4 400 MHz is priced at US\$2,999, the Macintosh Server G4 500 MHz is priced at US\$4,199, and the Macintosh Server G4 500 MHz with Mac OS X Server software is priced at US\$4,199. The Power Mac G4 is available in more than 25,000 build-to-order (BTO) configurations.

*Based on select tests published by Intel to demonstrate the speed of the 800 MHz Pentium III processor.



Apple Unveils New PowerBook: The Fastest Portable Ever

Faster Processor, Built-in FireWire and Longer Battery Life

MACWORLD EXPO TOKYO—February 16, 2000—Apple® today unveiled its new PowerBook®, the ultimate portable tool for creative professionals. Powered by PowerPC G3 processors running at up to 500 MHz, the new PowerBook features up to 10 hours of battery life* and two built-in FireWire® ports, which let creative professionals easily transfer pro-quality digital video with DV camcorders or external hard drives. Coupled with Apple's Final Cut Pro™ 1.2 software, the new PowerBook is a complete pro-quality mobile video editing system.

“The new PowerBook is the best tool in the world for creative professionals,” said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. “For example, with Final Cut Pro video editing software, it's the ultimate mobile movie studio.”

The new PowerBook is AirPort™ ready with a built-in slot for the AirPort Card and two built-in antennas for communicating with the AirPort Base Station. AirPort, Apple's revolutionary wireless networking solution, provides totally untethered Internet access at speeds of up to 11 megabits per second.

Providing outstanding desktop performance in a slim, lightweight design, the new PowerBook outperforms Pentium III-based notebook systems by up to 30 percent**. Key features include:

- * PowerPC G3 processors running at speeds of 400 MHz or 500 MHz;
- * 1MB level 2 backside cache and 100 MHz system bus;
- * Two 400 Mbps built-in FireWire ports for providing data transfer and power to high-speed peripherals;
- * Support for up to 512MB of SDRAM;
- * Brilliant 14.1-inch active-matrix display;
- * A thin and light design that weighs only 5.7 pounds with weight-saving module and battery, or 6.1 pounds with DVD-ROM drive and battery;
- * High performance Ultra ATA/66 internal hard drives of up to 18GB;
- * ATI RAGE Mobility 128 graphic controller featuring AGP 2X support for exceptional 2D/3D graphics performance, and 8MB SDRAM of video memory;
- * DVD-ROM drive with DVD movie playback;
- * VGA and S-Video ports for dual display and video mirroring;
- * Two USB ports for connection to the latest generation of computer peripherals;
- * Built-in 10/100BASE-T Ethernet;
- * 56K modem with V.90 support;
- * Easy access to RAM expansion and removable hard drive through flip-up keyboard; and
- * Mac® OS 9, featuring 9 Internet power tools.

Pricing and Availability - The new PowerBook is available immediately from Mac Help Desk, Inc in two configurations:

- * PowerBook 400 MHz with 64MB SDRAM, 1MB L2 backside cache , 6GB hard drive, 6x-speed (max) DVD-ROM for an estimated retail price of US\$2,499; and
- * PowerBook 500 MHz with 128MB SDRAM, 1MB L2 backside cache , 12GB hard drive, 6x-speed (max) DVD-ROM for an estimated retail price of US\$3,499.

Additional build-to-order options for the new PowerBook include: an 18GB hard drive; up to 512MB of RAM; and third-party options such as the Adaptec PC Card SCSI Adapter, and ZIP and SuperDisk expansion bay modules from VST Technologies.

- * Up to 10 hours using the system's dual-battery capability.
- ** Based on 16 actions in Adobe Photoshop 5.5 when running on battery and AC power.



Apple Enhances iBook Line

New iBook Special Edition in Stunning Graphite

MACWORLD EXPO TOKYO—February 16, 2000—In a move to make the best selling consumer portable in the U.S.* even better, Apple® today introduced an enhanced iBook™ lineup, including the debut of iBook Special Edition. Featuring double the memory and hard drive size, all three new iBook models come standard with 64MB of memory and a 6GB hard drive. iBook Special Edition features a faster 366 MHz PowerPC G3 processor and, like iMac™ DV Special Edition, comes in a stunning Graphite-color enclosure.

“The iBook has been a big hit with consumers, students and educators, and we want to make it even better,” said Steve Jobs, Apple’s CEO. “The new iBook Special Edition is the most elegant iBook ever.”

Like the original iBook, the new models offer “all-day” battery life of up to six hours and support for Apple’s revolutionary AirPort™ wireless networking for cable-free Internet access. The new iBook line retains its stunning design, which includes a rubber-coated translucent enclosure, a pullout handle for safe carrying, and a unique closing mechanism without latches.

iBook and iBook Special Edition features include:

- * A brilliant 12.1-inch (diagonal) active-matrix TFT SVGA display with millions of colors at 800x600 resolution;
- * A built-in 56K modem and 10/100BASE-T Ethernet;
- * Instant Internet access with a free 30-day trial with EarthLink;
- * 24x-speed CD-ROM drive;
- * A USB port for peripherals such as printers, input and storage devices;
- * Mac® OS 9, featuring 9 Internet power tools;
- * ATI RAGE Mobility graphic controller featuring AGP 2X support and 4MB of SDRAM;
- * Innovative power adapter whose cord winds up like a YoYo; and
- * Built-in stereo headphone jack.

Pricing and Availability

All three models are available immediately through mac Help Desk, Inc. iBook, available in Blueberry and Tangerine, is priced at US\$1,599. iBook Special Edition is priced at US\$1,799.

*According to PC Data’s Portables Hardware Tracking Service (October-December 1999).